



U.S. Immigration
and Customs
Enforcement

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News Release

SOUTH FLORIDA MAN SENTENCED TO 46 MONTHS IN PRISON FOR ATTEMPTING TO EXPORT AK-47 WEAPONS TO COLOMBIA

FT. LAUDERDALE – U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) announced that a 55-year-old South Florida resident convicted for attempting to export AK-47 weapons to Colombia was sentenced here Friday by United States District Court Judge James I. Cohn to a term of 46 months in prison.

On Jan. 13, 2005, Guillermo Cardoso-Arias, a citizen of Colombia pleaded guilty to a two-count Indictment charging him with knowingly engaging and attempting to engage in business of brokering activities with respect to the export of 200 AK-47 fully automatic assault rifles, and attempting to export 200 fully automatic AK-47 assault rifles without a license. Both counts are in violation of Title 22, United States Code, Section 2778.

The sentencing was announced jointly by Marcos Daniel Jiménez, United States Attorney for the Southern District of Florida; Jesus Torres, Special Agent- in-Charge of ICE in Miami; Julie Torres, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives (ATF); and Robert E. Harris, Special Agent in Charge, U.S. Department of Defense, Defense Criminal Investigative Service (DCIS).

In law enforcement monitored and recorded conversations, Cardoso-Arias asserted that he was purchasing the two hundred (200) AK-47 fully automatic assault rifles on behalf of the Colombian "Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia" ("AUC"), known as the United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia. He further stated that the weapons would be used to fight the Colombian "Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia" ("FARC"), known as the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia." Cardoso-Arias explained that there was a need for a lot of AK-47's because they are lighter and easier to handle than other weapons when climbing the mountains of Colombia. Both the AUC and FARC have been designated by the U.S. State Department as terrorist organizations.

"The sentencing of Cardoso-Arias demonstrates ICE's commitment to keeping arms and other sensitive technology from falling into the wrong hands," said Jesus Torres, special agent-in-charge

of ICE in Miami. "Those who conspire to sell arms to overseas paramilitaries will face consequences."

Assistant United States Attorney Michael Walleisa handled the prosecution of this case.

ICE's National Security Investigations Division oversees investigative programs designed to protect our national security by combating terrorism and preventing the illegal importation, exportation and transfer of Weapons of Mass Destruction, arms and munitions and critical technology.

ICE

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement was established in March 2003 as the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE is comprised of five integrated divisions that form a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities.